

THE NEW 52!

SUPERMAN

ACTION

COMICS



GRANT
MORRISON
RAGS
MORALES
BRENT
ANDERSON
RICK
BRYANT

dccomics.com

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DEC 2011

DC COMICS

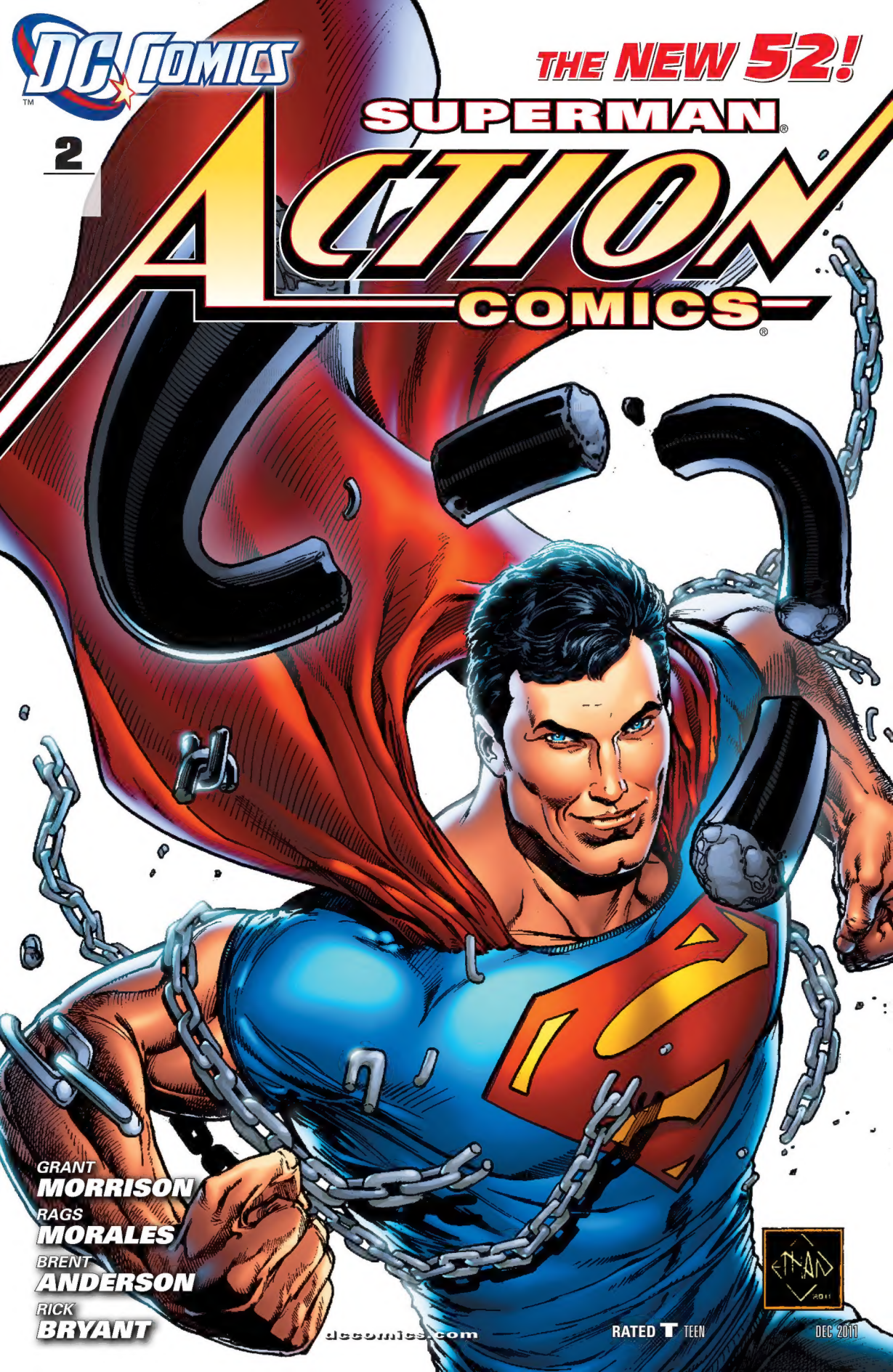
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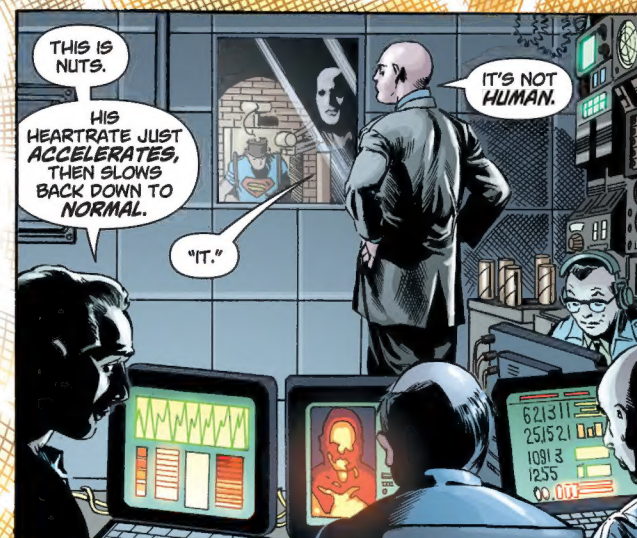
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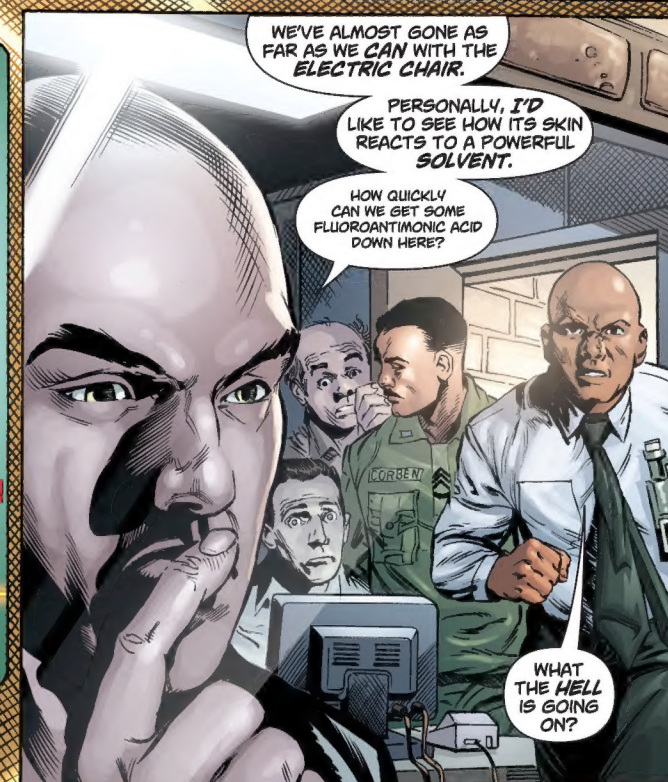
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SUPERMAN



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**RAGS MORALES &
BRENT ANDERSON**
Pencillers
**RICK BRYANT &
BRENT ANDERSON**
Inkers

IN CHAINS



LUTHOR!

DOCTOR IRONS.

SERGEANT CORBEN.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE YOUR LIVES BRIGHTER?



YOU CAN TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING HERE.

I ONLY JUST HEARD ABOUT THIS!

TORTURING A MAN ON U.S. SOIL, OR ANYWHERE ELSE, IS UNACCEPTABLE!



THOSE LAWS APPLY TO HUMAN BEINGS, SURELY.

AND TELL ME HOW WE CAN TORTURE A SO-CALLED MAN WITH STEEL-HARD SKIN AND HAIR THAT CAN'T BE CUT?

TAKE A LOOK. HE'S FINE.



THAT'S HIM?

THAT BEAT-UP-LOOKING KID IS HIM?

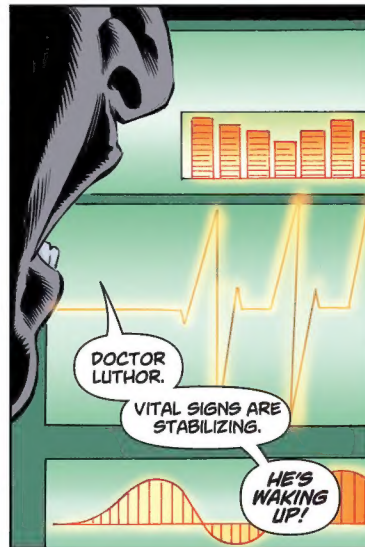
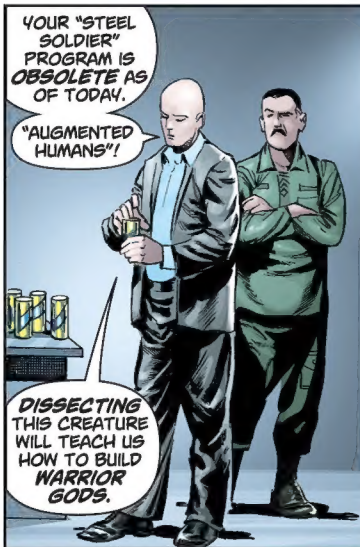
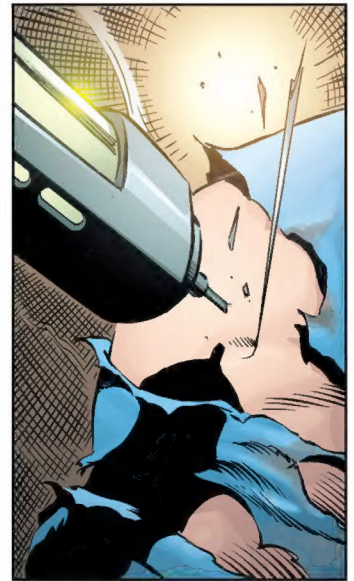
"IT."

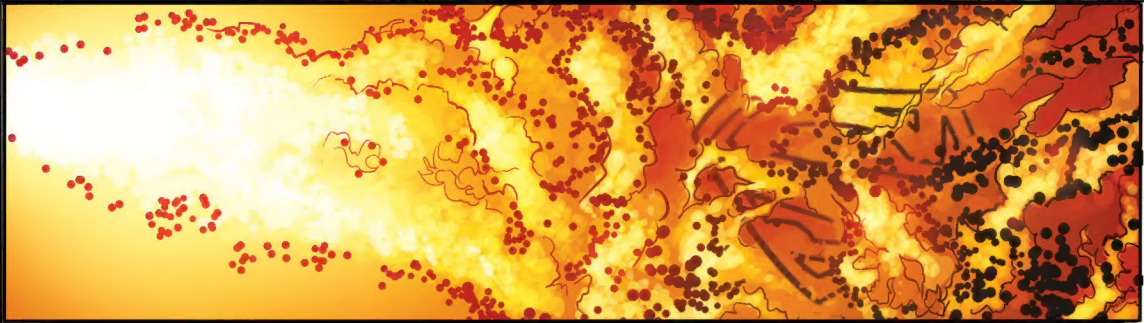


ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?

I WANT THIS STOPPED RIGHT NOW!

HE'S SHAKING OFF THE GAS.







GENERAL SAM LANE, C'MON! WE DO THIS ALL THE TIME.

FATHER'S DAY IS JUNE.



SO, WHAT, YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY THAT MORE THAN **ONCE A YEAR IS LESS** THAN MY DARLING DAD, YOUR BOSS, DESERVES?

AN AMERICAN HERO? SEE THAT JEEP?



DAD, I ALREADY KNOW YOU BROUGHT SUPERMAN HERE RIGHT AFTER THE TRAIN CRASH!

THE TUBE WAS SABOTAGED.

HE SAVED ALL OUR LIVES, DAD!



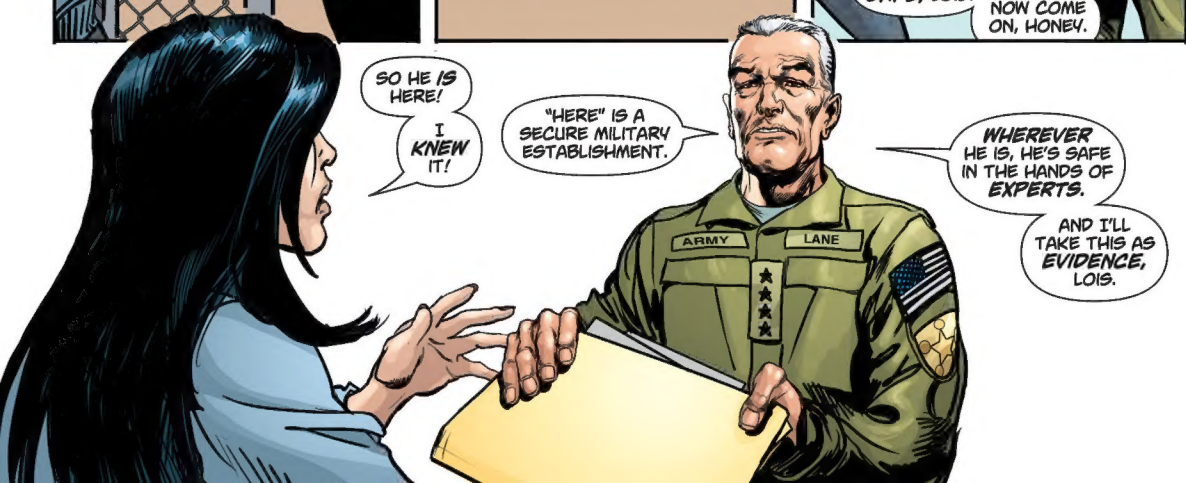
AND LOOK. THESE ARE PHOTOGRAPHS, CUTTINGS, EVERY EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT I COULD FIND...

HE'S A GOOD PERSON.

WHO DOESN'T OFFICIALLY EXIST.

BUT IF HE DID, HE'D BE SAFE, LOIS.

NOW COME ON, HONEY.



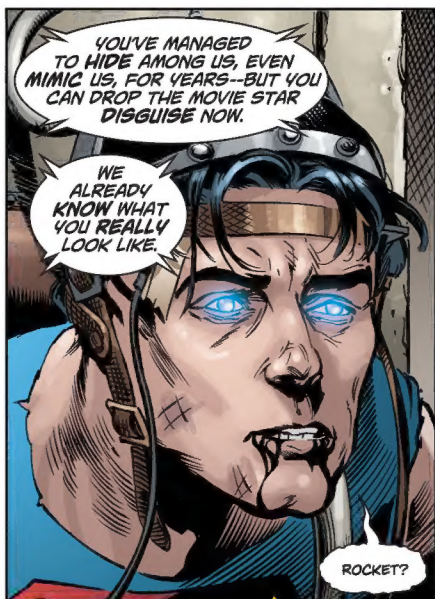
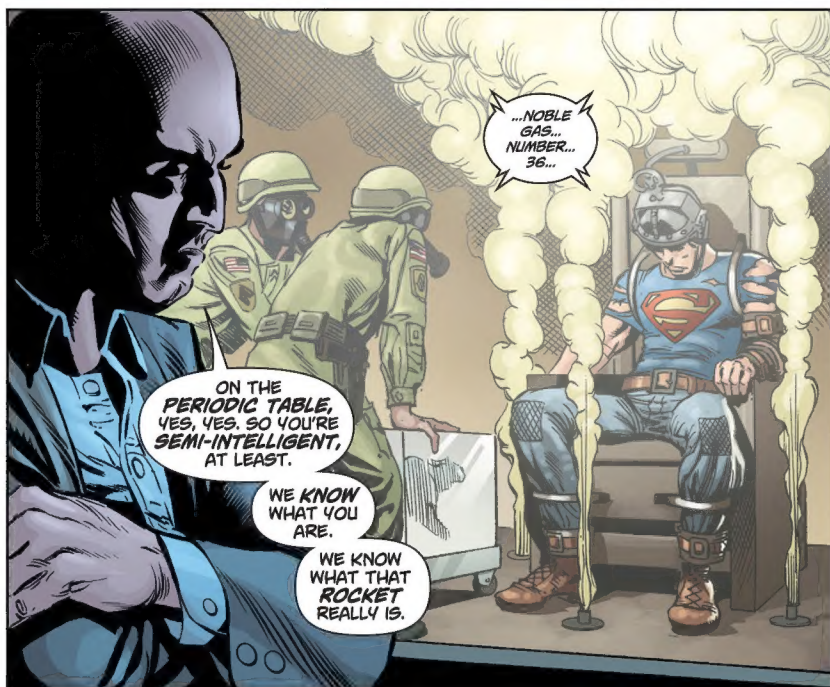
SO HE IS HERE!

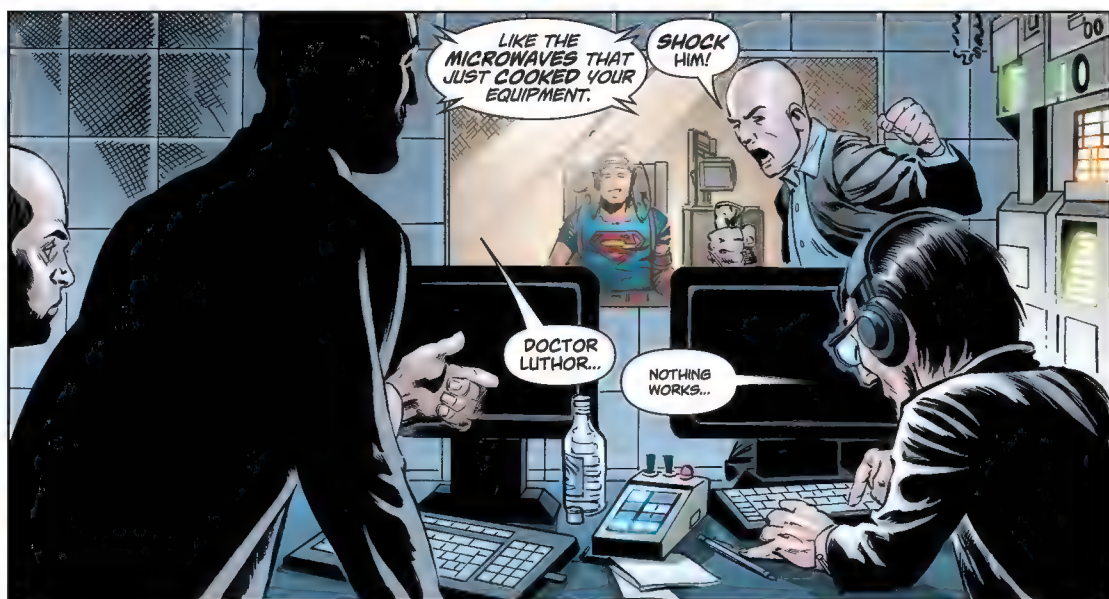
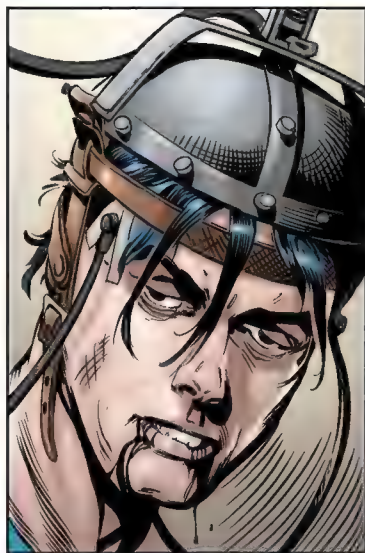
I KNEW IT!

"HERE" IS A SECURE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

WHEREVER HE IS, HE'S SAFE IN THE HANDS OF EXPERTS.

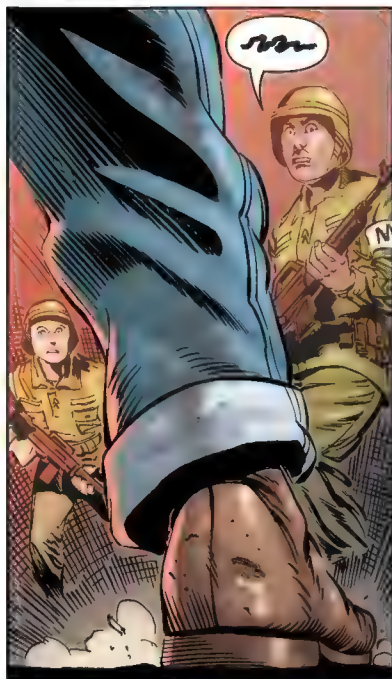
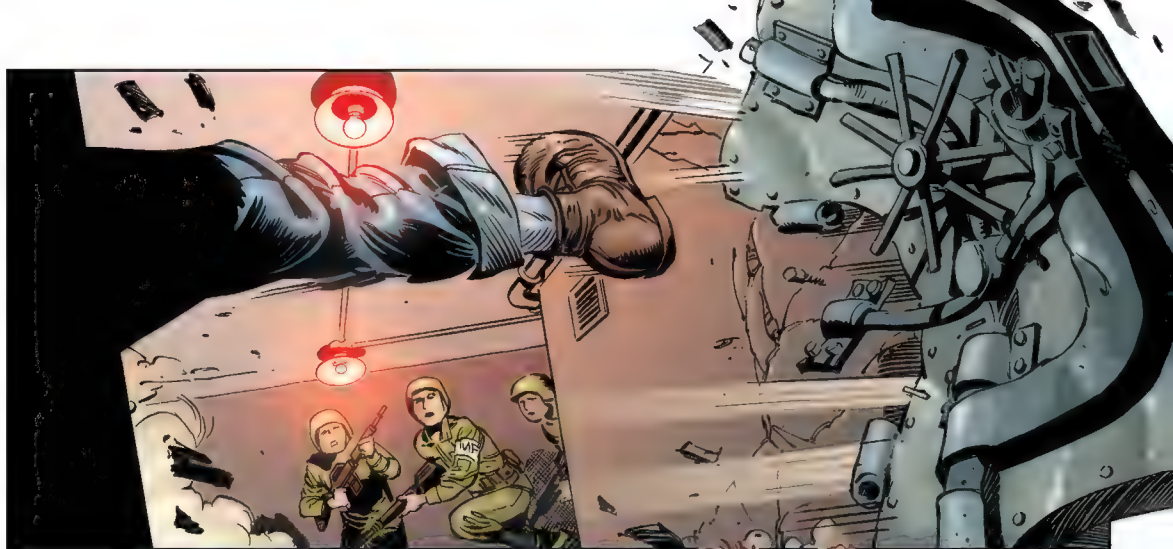
AND I'LL TAKE THIS AS EVIDENCE, LOIS.

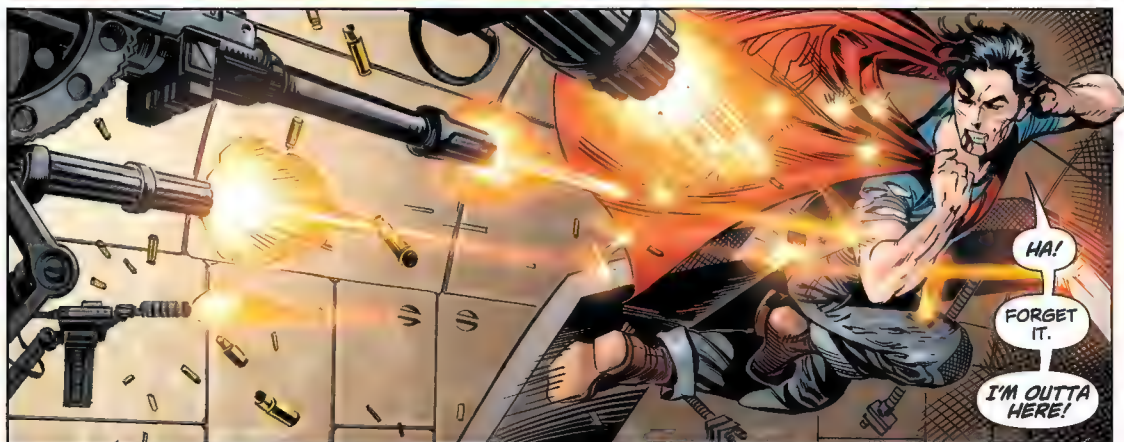
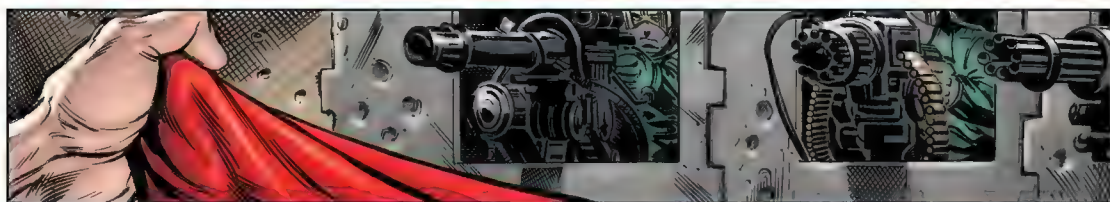
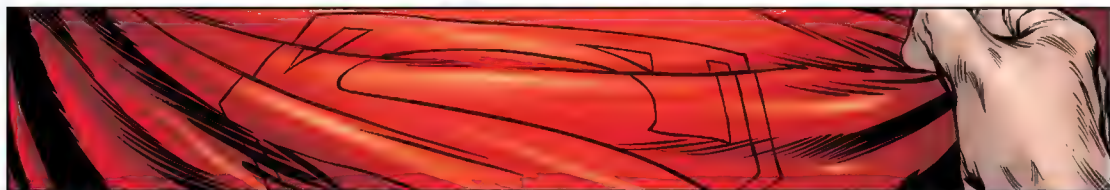


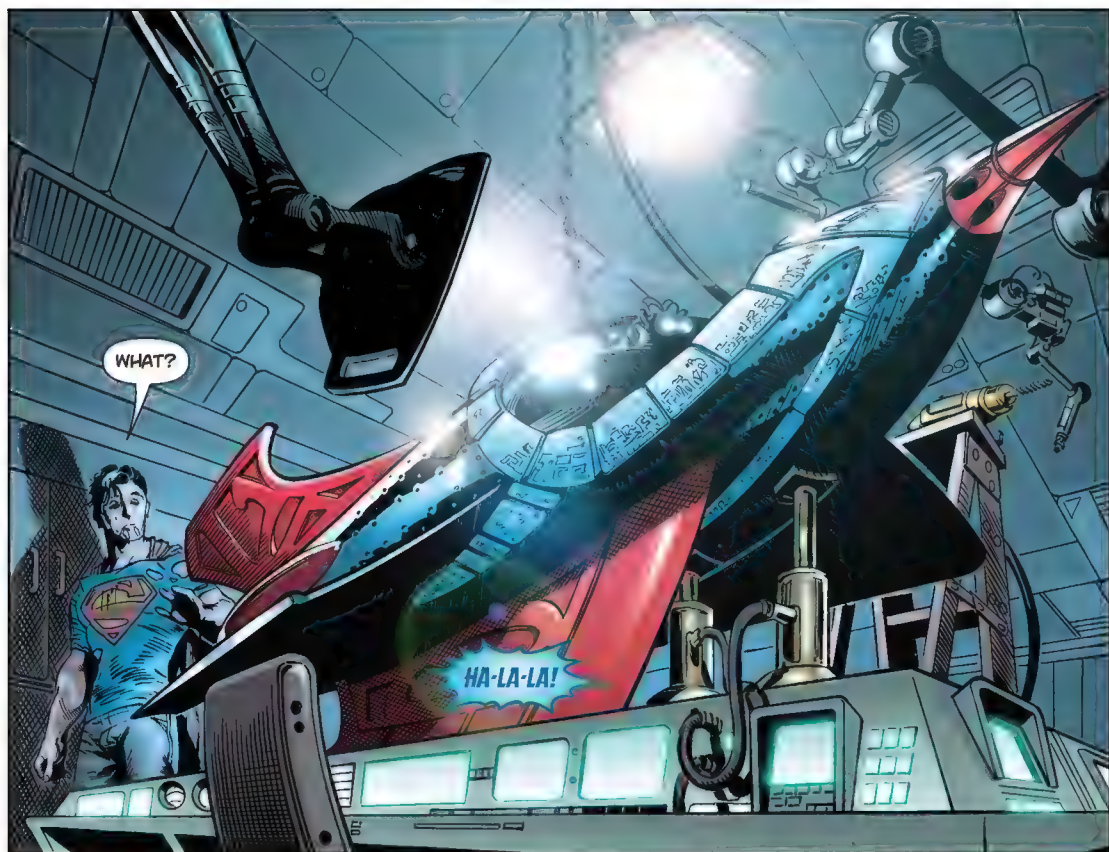




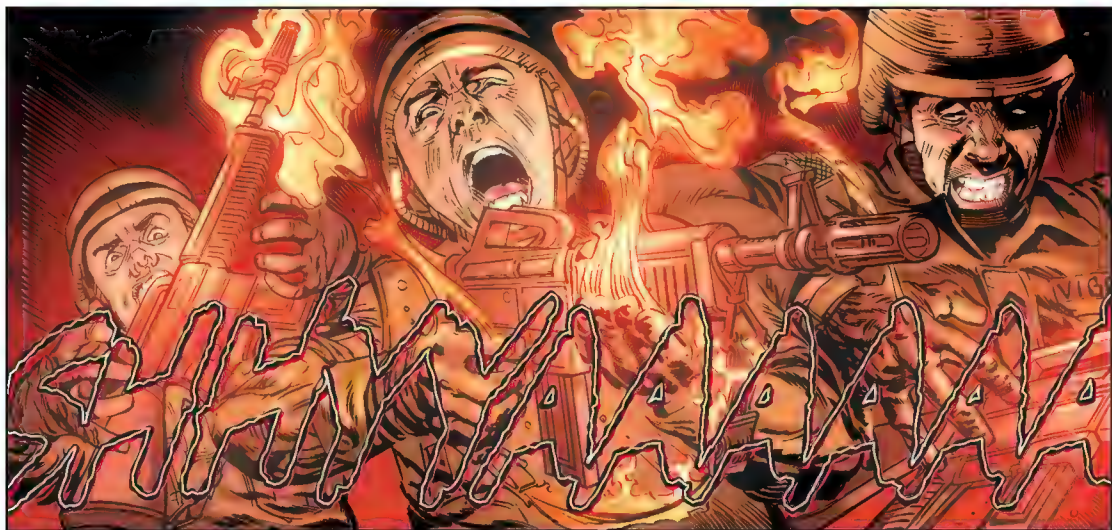
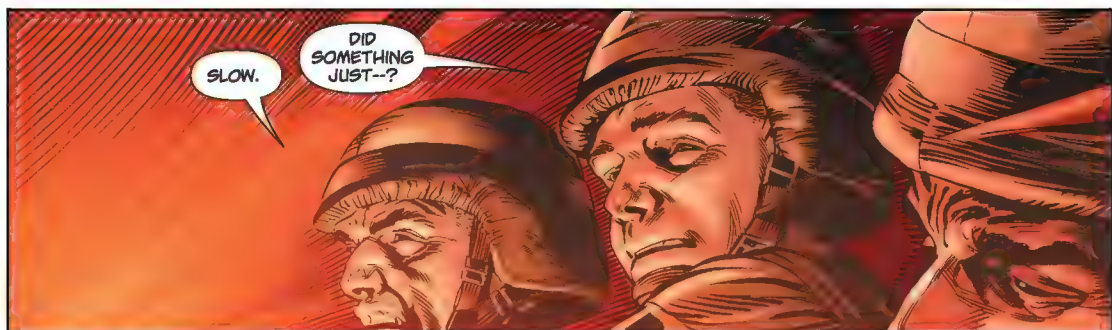


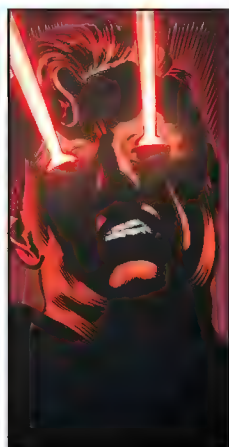


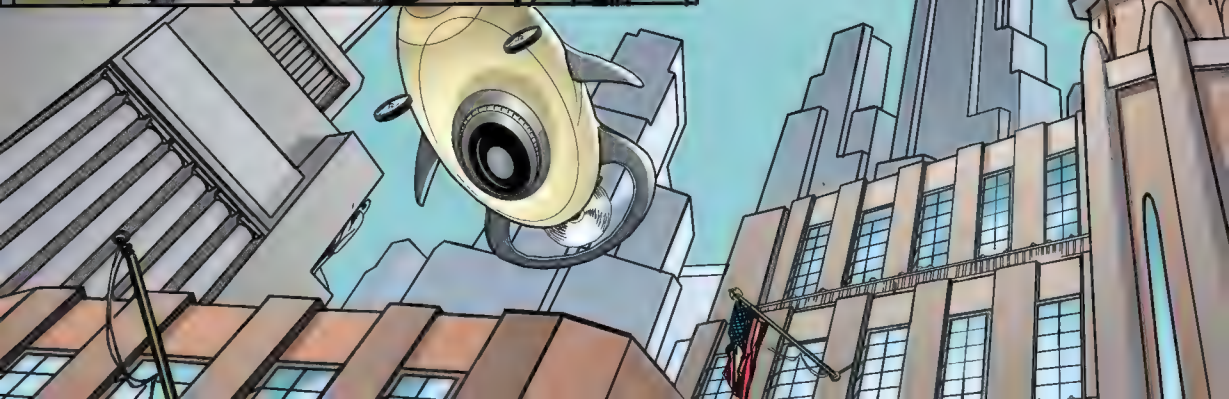
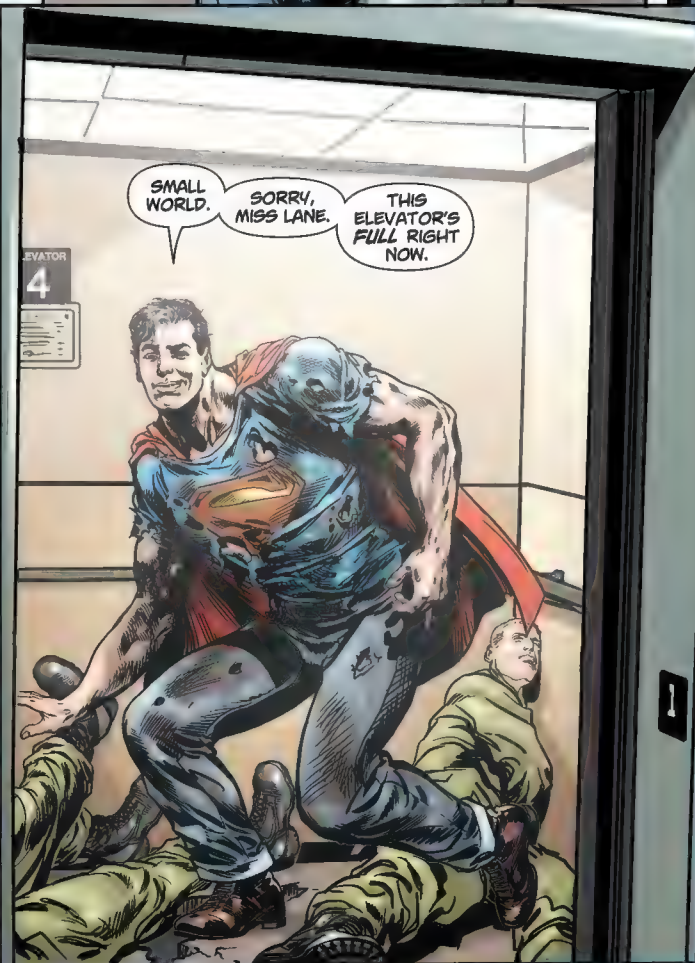


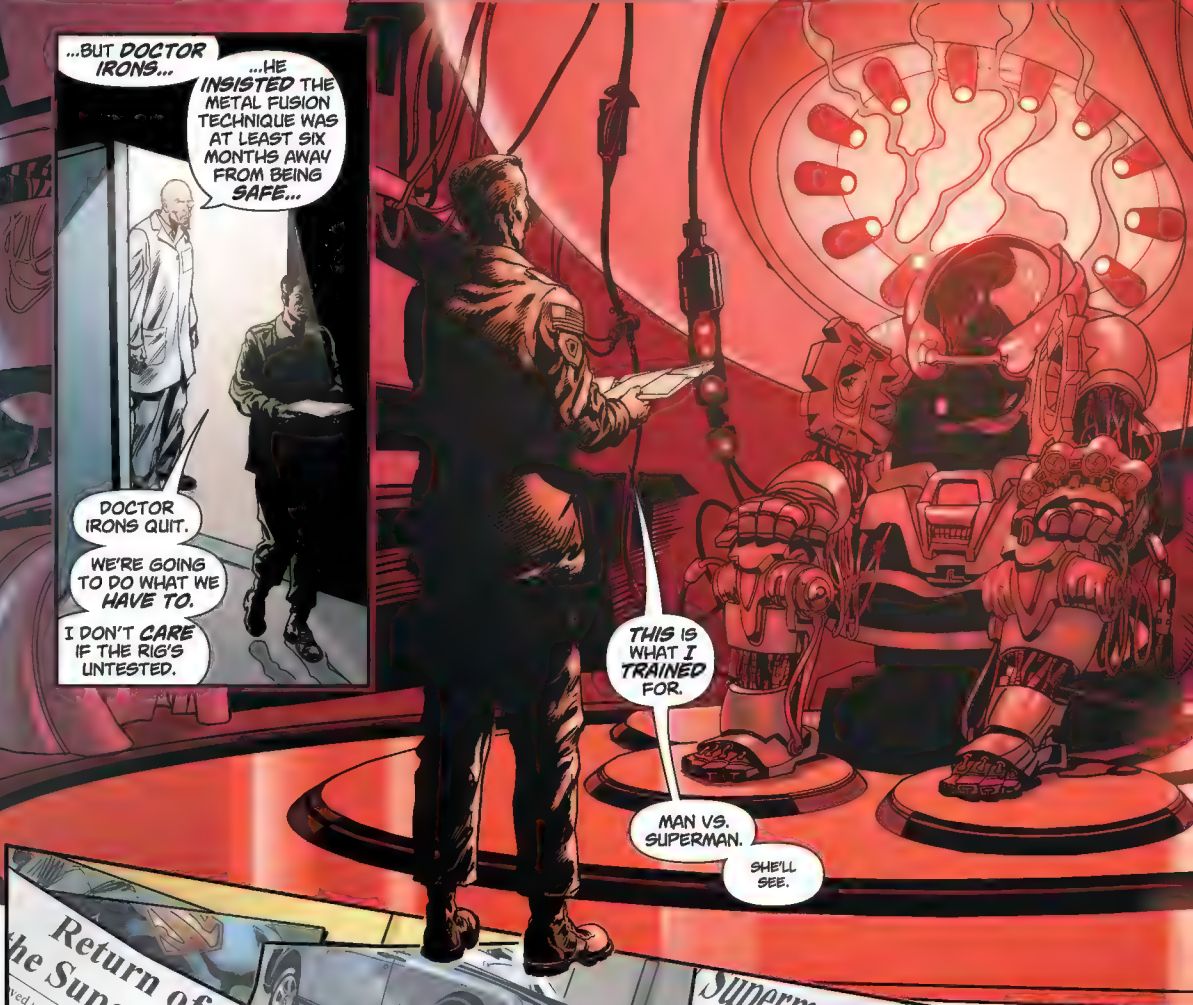










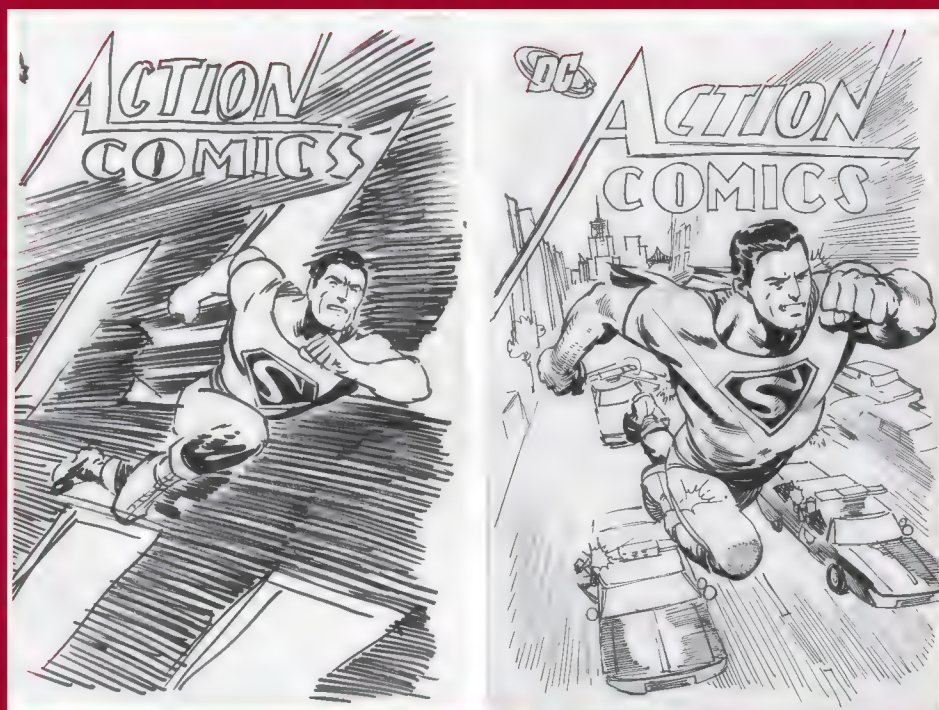




inside the

ACTION

GET AN EXCLUSIVE PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES
OF THE CREATION OF ACTION COMICS #1-2 WITH
GRANT MORRISON AND RAGS MORALES



RAGS MORALES' COVER SKETCHES FOR ACTION COMICS #1.

ACTION!

GRANT MORRISON: The physical things Superman does came from the first year of Action Comics, where they were doing this nonstop, kinetic, muscular action. I wanted to get that into the actual form and structure of this whole run, that feeling of motion and action. It's called Action Comics -- let's do that!

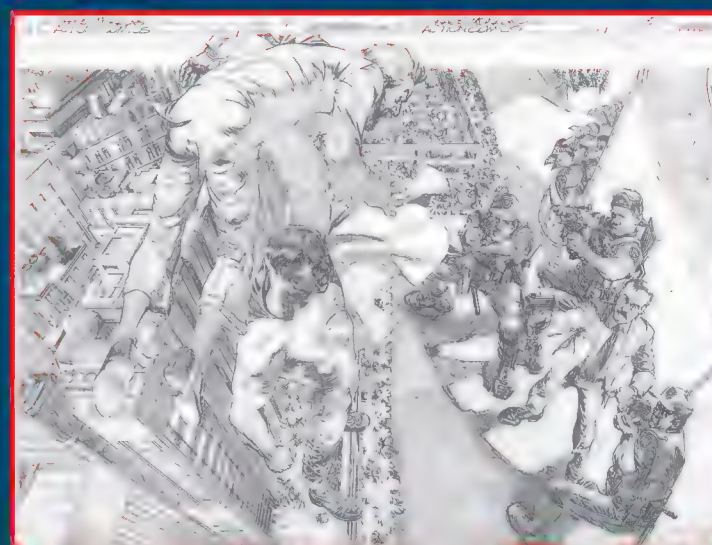
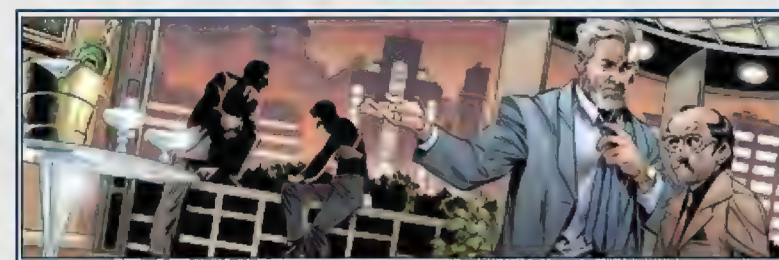
RAGS MORALES: For the first twenty years, flying with that pose I gave him on the first cover -- the one bent leg and the one straight leg, and counterbalancing with the arms -- was the Superman trademark, and it made him look like he was running. Here I am trying to do an homage to it. It brought it back to the essence of that character.



THE LITTLE MAN

MORRISON: I was thinking of the dwarf from *Twin Peaks* -- a gnome-like figure, a creepy little elf.

MORALES: I relied more on the Robert Blake character from *Lost Highway*. Somehow he ended up looking a little bit like Elvis Costello, too... [Laughs]



A WHOLE NEW SUPERMAN

MORRISON: Like a guitarist in a band of 17-year-olds, experience doesn't even come into it -- he just does it. He's a superhero -- he doesn't have to think. He's a kid who's been set free from Ma and Pa Kent. Both of them are dead, and suddenly he thinks, "I'm the most powerful thing on the planet. It's time to start cleaning up!" [Laughs] It seemed like you could get a really good story out of a young man who's not considering what he's doing -- he's just doing it because it feels right.

MORALES: Honestly, I could never really get into Superman before. I even had a hard time drawing him, because he'd been done so many times by so many people. I'm glad we're going back to the beginning with him. It's a chance to do it all over again, knowing what we know now.



SUPER-SWAGGER

MORALES: I thought, "What are the two iconic things that Superman would be to me?" He'd be part Steve Reeves and part Elvis. [Laughs] When he's catching the bullet, he's got that Elvis light in the corner of his eye.

MORRISON: That swagger is part of what the rest of the world believes about America. They're all John Wayne! [Laughs] I wanted to put that back into Superman, that attitude of "I know what I'm doing, I'm the biggest guy on the block...but lucky for you, I'm a good guy!"



CLARK KENT

MORALES: I put him in baggy clothing to hide his muscles. Maybe stoop his posture a little bit, make him a little slack-jawed at certain moments so he doesn't look at all like a hero -- more like a 22-year-old nerd, which is what he's trying to do. He's a very good actor, which is a super power I don't think many other superheroes have. And I realized that there's a certain amount of thickness to the lenses of his glasses that can help distort the size of his eyes and make them seem larger.

MORRISON: I love Rags's Clark Kent. I think it's great, this Harry Potter Clark Kent. His face is so young and pliable! His eyes get bigger, so he looks more like a kid. That's why Rags is so good to work with -- he really thinks about this stuff, and it makes such a big difference to the finished product. When I saw that Clark Kent, it changed the way I wrote the character. He suddenly seemed very young, and he could be a little bit brattish. Clark's obviously this little hardcore farmer's boy who's not taking any crap from anyone.



THE LABORS OF SUPERMAN

MORRISON: I constantly put Superman up against very physical objects: a wrecking ball, a tank, a train, solid stone. It was designed for the motion of that muscular, 1938 Superman -- to really tie him into physical things, to big, heavy objects.

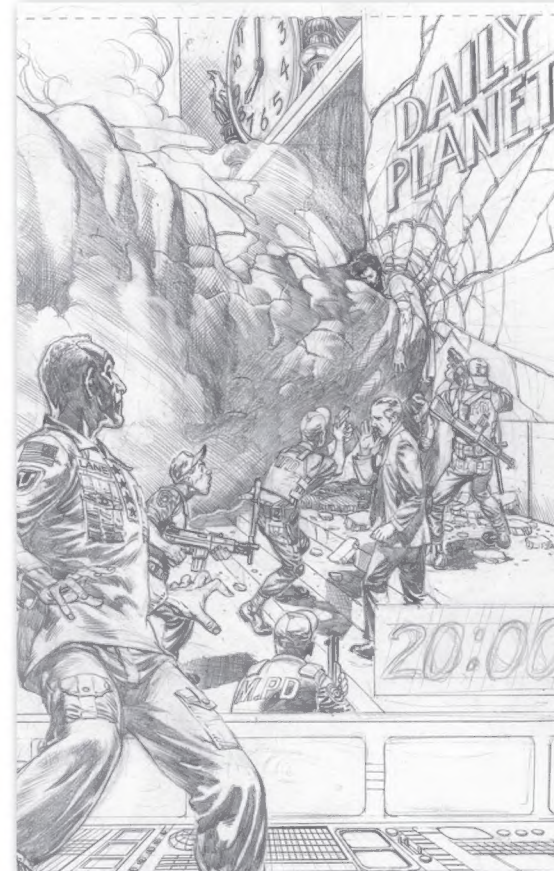
MORALES: I love that he's powered down. Love it, love it, love it, love it. I love that he's Herculean again. He's about doing the tasks. Superman back in the '40s was more relevant than Superman of recent years, because things hurt him. There was a danger to that.



MORE POWERFUL THAN A LOCOMOTIVE?

MORRISON: When he's hit by a train, he's not the Superman we've seen for the last 25-30 years. This is someone who can be hurt. I wanted to show he has limits. But it's also this up-front connection to the Superman legend -- he's actually punched in the chest by the "speeding bullet."

MORALES: Originally, when Superman took off, he was exerting effort. To stop a train was painful. To get electrocuted was painful. He survived it much better than we could, but we forget how impossible these things are to do. I love that he's been brought back down to Earth. That's the way it should be.



MEET LEX LUTHOR

MORRISON: Superman is us at our best, and Lex is us at our worst...but they're both us. He's selfish, he's inwardly directed, he's greedy, he's egotistical, he pretends to hate Superman but really he wants to look like Superman, he's constantly chugging energy drinks, he talks crap...[Laughs] I wanted to make him an embodiment of all of our worst traits. They're what make us human, so that's what makes Lex human and relatable. That's why Lex Luthor's such a great villain: We all recognize those traits.

MORALES: Lex's weight is one of those little subliminal things. It adds a layer of jealousy and feeling insignificant and insecure about yourself. He's this out-of-shape, snide, condescending jerk who we're too mature now to stuff into a locker when we see him, but we still do it every time in our heads. [Laughs] Luthor's that guy from the electronics store who condescends to you when you ask about the difference between a megabyte and a gigabyte.

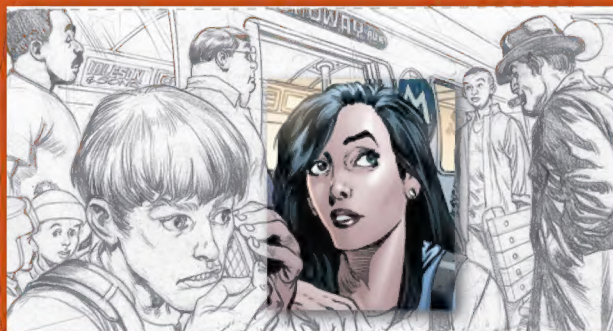


The following is a panel description from the script of ACTION COMICS #1: Big pic. Now we cut to a military command center somewhere outside Metropolis. Nerve center atmosphere with military personnel hunched over computers. Big wall screen like they have at NASA. All yours, Rags. The picture is dominated by a big screen on which we see a GRAPHIC OF METROPOLIS with a pulsing circle in lower midtown east where Superman was last seen. Silhouetted against the screen are two of our principal players - Lois Lane's dad GENERAL SAM LANE and Superman's arch-villain LEX LUTHOR. Lane is the archetypal tough American dad. Luthor, like Superman, is a little younger, perhaps a little heavier and sturdier. I like the idea that he was a little fat until his jealousy of Superman drove him to the gym to become the trim, muscular Luthor of the Silver Age and more recent stories. So he's not obese but he's veering a little more in the visual direction of Luthor's heavier build as it appeared in stories from 1941 to 1959.

LOIS LANE, REPORTER

MORRISON: Lois is an army girl, but she's become a crusading journalist to annoy her parents. She's like Clark Kent: She's crusading, she wants to do good, she's a hero in her own right. It changes the whole Superman dynamic, because Lois isn't tied into any guy. She's a party girl, she's smart, she's clever -- she's Lady Gaga! She's the smartest girl on the planet.

MORALES: I think she has a poster of Woodward & Bernstein on the wall -- that's what's important to her. I see her as constantly thinking. She may be saying one thing, but in her eyes you can tell she's thinking fifteen steps ahead of you.



JIMMY OLSEN, SUPERMAN'S CLARK KENT'S PAL

MORRISON: Jimmy's playing the role of Clark's friend rather than Superman's friend. He's the guy that Clark connected with when he first turned up in Metropolis. The two of them are geeks together, talking about movies and sci-fi. Jimmy's a young kid who's getting into this whole photography thing and is really smart. These are characters who you can imagine all have blogs, and Jimmy has his photographs up on Flickr. They're modern kids.

MORALES: He's Clark's best friend. They're buds. They're on the same level. Initially, he was all, "Well, golly gee, Mr. Kent!" But now he's just kind of like, "Hey, Clark, man -- dude." If you want to make Jimmy Olsen cool, stop making him such an obsequious sycophant. You bring Clark down to him -- which is perfect for Clark, too. It puts them on equal terms and instantly makes Jimmy cooler.



"THAT BEAT-UP-LOOKING KID"

MORRISON: You can tell he's in danger simply because he's no longer in motion!

MORALES: All art comes from the center. All you have to do is remember all the scraps you got into as a kid...

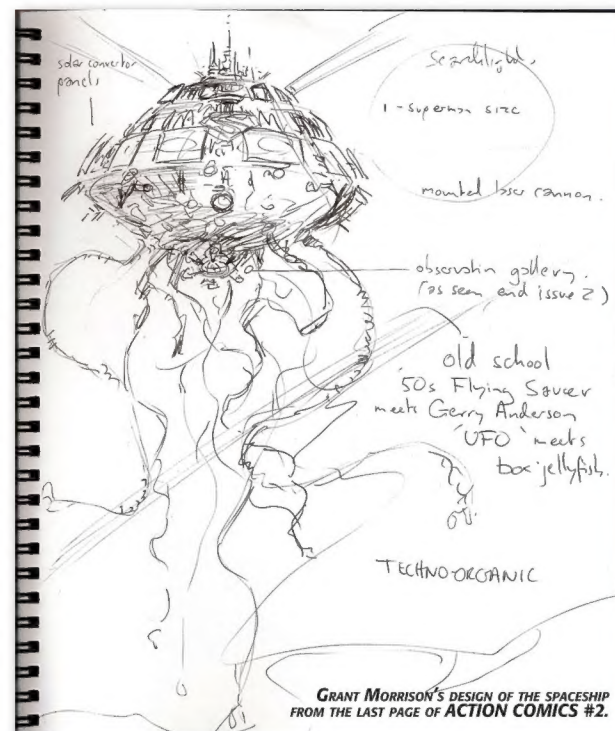


KAL-EL'S ROCKET

MORRISON: The rocket is Moses' basket, the basket that the Hindi hero Karna was placed in -- the idea of people putting a child into the river of destiny. The cape, the rocket, the costume, the ship we see at the end of #2 -- everything is part of the story and has character arcs of its own. Every little bit of the Superman legend is turned into something meaningful in its own right.

MORALES: Those little squiggles are designed to be hieroglyphs. If you're Kryptonian, you can read them. But it's funny: As I was drawing it, I started seeing things that reminded me of Moses' basket. Then I'm thinking, "Kal-EL -- 'El' is a Hebrew word for God. The world's being destroyed, so he's being put into the basket and sent down the Nile." So I made it a little more basket-y.

"IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE"



MORALES: When I first drew it, I had a mothership surrounded by little runabout ships straight out of The Jetsons. It was completely wrong. I sent it back and forth with the editor. Then Grant went ahead and did this jellyfish kind of design...

MORRISON: I think it's creepy that Lex is talking to something that doesn't reply, and then you see that image. That's the first hint of a bigger, overarching story to come. And tentacles are the creepiest things! [Laughs]

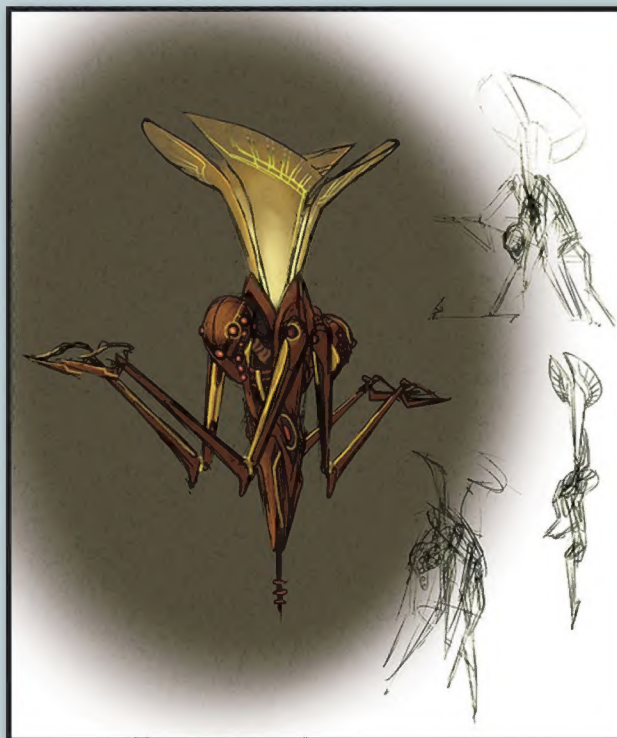


AND A TASTE OF THINGS TO COME... KRYPTON DESIGNS BY GENE HA!

MORRISON: It's the planet of your dreams. A scientific utopia. I wanted to explore Krypton as the world of super people. What would happen if they worked it all out, if they lived for 500 years with amazing technology?

GENE HA: I'm going to vary Kryptonians by standard facial features and hair texture and placement, mixed with very unusual color of hair and skin. A cocktail party of supermodels attacked by a god-child with god-crayons. I see Kryptonian identity as being very tied to their bodies. They always want their bodies to be more perfect, though their concept of perfection can drift into surprising directions.

MORE THAN JUST A LAMP



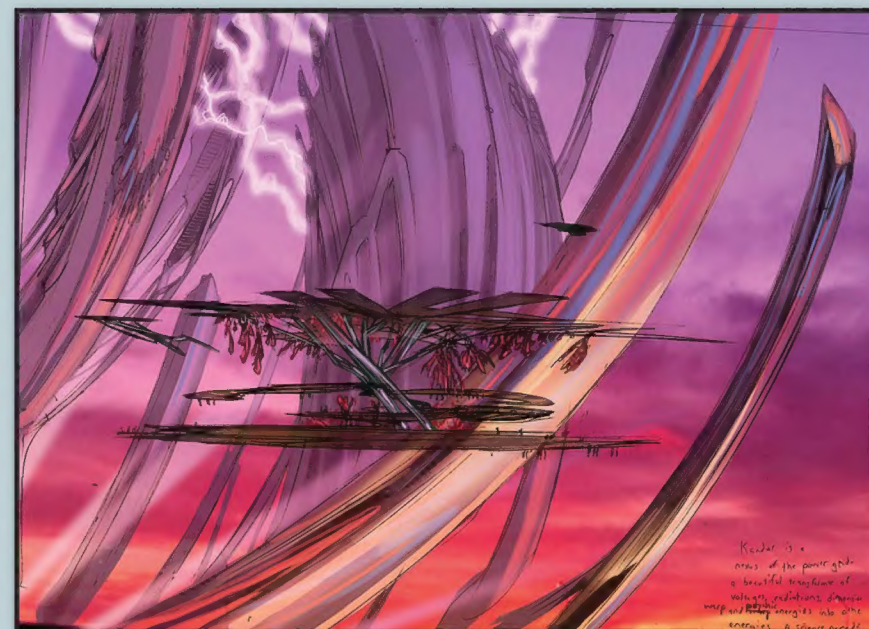
HA: The serving bots are both servants and decorative lamps with figural columns. The lily/insect wing/lamp shade is their hover device. The robots are supposed to hint both at mantis arms, and also skeletons – Lilies and skeletons being metaphors for the briefness of life and the permanence of death.



HA: At the basic level, Kryptonians could have body-defying technology and clothes. I imagine Lara's snarky sister Zara wearing a golden face mask on the back of her head, which lets her speak to and see people behind her back. She pretty much only uses her real mouth to emote and eat and drink. Instead of drinking cocktails, they're sniffing from glass tubes. This plays with ideas like sniffing flowers, and sticking your nose into a wine glass before taking a sip. No idea what they get from sniffing: aromatherapy, mild intoxication, or even nutrition.

DANCING ON THE CEILING

HA: The party platform makes heavy use of anti-gravity and other hover technology. Each floor has normal Kryptonian gravity on each side, and people are walking on each side. It has no stairs, but instead the sun crystal columns also have their own gravity for anyone touching its surface.



LIKE SON, LIKE FATHER



MORRISON: Jor-El looks just like the father of Superman should look. He's wearing an outfit that closely resembles the Jim Lee Superman suit, except in Jor-El's trademark green and red. He has the science guild symbol on his chest -- a ringed planet.

THE NEW FALL (OF KANDOR) COLLECTION



CITY AS SCIENCE COLONY

HA: I'm imagining Kandor as a giant science colony. It's a mountain-sized power grid transformer, transforming and storing voltages, radiation, dimensional warps, and perhaps even information and telepathic memories. The main administration is in the floating dome at the top of the city, but various other facilities have occupant space, too

Grant & Rags are just getting started, folks. Come back next month for an attack on Krypton, the first strike from the terrifying new threat from the final page of this issue, and much, much more!

ZOONNE

